

# PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

THIS week and next should afford a fascinating display of Sir Winston Churchill's virtuosity as a speaker. Tomorrow he is to make a political speech—to the Young Conservatives in his own constituency, on Wednesday, in the Drapers' Hall, he is to receive the Williamsburg Award—that tribute from Virginia which was instituted as "a continual reminder that there are today, as there were yesterday, vigorous, courageous and eloquent leaders", and a week later he is to receive the Freedom of Belfast and Londonderry.

Is there any other octogenarian who could be relied on to cope with three such differing occasions with as much pungency in the one case and with such feeling and felicity in the others? I anticipate Sir Winston enjoying himself on each occasion as much as his audience.

Following his retirement from office many must have wondered just what position he would occupy in public life. There was little need to wonder. In his case more than ever it is not the position which makes the man but the character and personality of the man that makes the position, and one that is secure for ever. The extraordinary warmth of the greetings to him on his 81st birthday prove that.

## Biographer's Holiday

THE biographer of Gladstone, Sir Philip Magnus-Allefort, and his wife sailed on Thursday for South Africa where he intends to visit all Kitchener's battlefields.

This strenuous activity is required by the biography of



Sir Philip Magnus-Allefort

Kitchener ("A terrific Imperialist who never cast any roots," comments Sir Philip) upon which he is engaged with the help of original documents assembled for him by the present Lord Kitchener and now stored at Stokesay Court, Sir Philip's Shropshire home.

After Kitchener, Sir Philip will write a new Life of Edward VII, and I understand that some remarkable sources of unexplored material will be at his disposal.

It is a mystery to his friends how Sir Philip manages to combine un-

tingling authorship with his duties as a member of the Shropshire County Council and a Justice of the Peace. He is also involved in the care of Stokesay, the famous Norman castle which vies in fame with Berkeley Castle, and which Lady Magnus-Allefort, without assistance from the National Trust, maintains and keeps open to the public.

## As She is Wrote

IN accusing Britain of having sinned; Hitler's hordes against the Soviet Union, Mr. Khrushchev is in accord with the official Soviet attitude, which has always been (1) that during the thirties Britain and France tried to turn Hitler against the Soviet Union; (2) that the war, when it came, was an imperialist war started by France and Britain and (3) that, when Hitler invaded Russia, Britain pulled her punches while Russia won the war single-handed.

This mendacious version of history accounts for the extraordinary article on Sir Anthony Eden in the latest, and still unfinished edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.

## Mr. Hyde, I Presume

I reprint a large part of Sir Anthony's entry.

"English reactionary politician and diplomat. . . From 1935 to 1938 Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Carried out a policy of appeasement of the Fascist aggressors, but broke with the Prime Minister, N. Chamberlain, on account of their different views on the methods of executing it. . .

"Eden also bears responsibility for the policy of breaking the obligation to open a second front in 1942, an obligation assumed for itself by the British Government.

"After the defeat of the Conservatives in the election of July, 1945, Eden, being Churchill's deputy in the leadership of the Conservative Party, actively supported the imperialist and aggressive foreign policy carried out in union with the Conservatives by the Labour Government." After this officially printed diatribe, Mr. Peter Matthews' "thoroughly typographical" seems pretty small beer.

## A Letter from Max

DEAR ATTICUS.—I hope I don't intrude, but some of my friends have been alarmed by the recent paragraph in which you referred to the "modest circumstances" in which I face "another winter at Rapallo" and to my having "only the bare necessities of life." Let me assure you and them that I live, now as heretofore, in very great comfort and with no anxieties, and that the winter in Rapallo is always a very mild affair.

MAX BEERBOHM.

## Shipyard Ceremony

THE launching of the largest oil tanker in the world at Vickers-Armstrongs' yard at Barrow-in-Furness received, I thought, less notice than it deserved; for it is one of the outstanding achievements of British shipbuilding. It

was also the occasion of a number of admirable speeches. Excusing himself from saying more than a few words, Sir Ronald Weeks, chairman of the purchase of a minute car, he clearly wished himself back on the bekeless bicycle on which he had ridden during his long period as housemaster at Sedburgh. (When proceeding downhill on his idiosyncratic vehicle Dr. Gorton would place one foot firmly on the front wheel and carry on till the smell of scorched Astorburg his meditations.)

## Great and Small

THE Bishop had a passion for ideas, and was never afraid of changing his own. Himself, for instance, an exceptionally successful headmaster of Blundell's, he inclined in later years to consider

churchman." Possessions bored him; gaiters, likewise. His cloth cap and elderly topcoat were familiar to Coventry; and although he had reluctantly agreed to the purchase of a minute car, he clearly wished himself back on the bekeless bicycle on which he had ridden during his long period as housemaster at Sedburgh. (When proceeding downhill on his idiosyncratic vehicle Dr. Gorton would place one foot firmly on the front wheel and carry on till the smell of scorched Astorburg his meditations.)

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boarding-schools a mistake. Even in the precincts of the House of Lords he could be glimpsed with neckwear awry and fine enameled features on fire with intellectual excitement; and he never allowed that grandest of conceptions, the new Coventry Cathedral, to override the immediate needs of the diocese.

## Fractured Fame.

SINCE 1945, Oxford rugger has produced a particularly fine crop of half-backs, and the Twickenham roll includes such memorable names as Newton Thompson, Donnelly, Green, Hofmeyr, C. B. Van Ryneveld and Paul Johnstone.

Some of these players, notably Van Ryneveld and Johnstone, originally established their reputations as three-quarters, but now

Oxford has a new "natural" scrum-half, D. O. Bract, who should maintain the tradition.

A short, square youth, Bract already carries many marks of battle. His stubby fingers have been cut and scarred by the cleats of Welsh boots. Some of his teeth are missing, and his nose, though straight, has been broken.

At the time of this injury Bract was playing for a junior Welsh team. When the bone healed he could not regain his place in the side. Then the Newport scrum-half was injured. A call for recruits was sent out. A trial was held, and young Bract was chosen. From that moment he has never looked back.

## A Small Village

THE little village of Checkendon in Oxfordshire, unimpressed by pontifications from high places

about a revival of the Church, actually elected to do something about it themselves.

A meeting of the village, under the chairmanship of the Rector, decided to start a New Letter and to have a new Sunday service at 9.30 a.m. so that housewives with Sunday luncheon to cook, and golfers with eight to break, could first go to church.

## Renaissance

The results have been remarkable. Congregations rose from a handful to well over forty, and the circulation of the unpretentious little New Letter, price 1d, whose contents range from the Rector's "leader" to reports of football matches and "social" news, is over 180, or more than the number of houses in the village.

The Editor, at Wheeler's, Checkendon, near Reading, has run off extra copies of this month's issue, which he will gladly send in exchange for a 6½ stamp to anyone interested in the religious renaissance of one small English village.

## A la Recherche . . .

A DISTINGUISHED member of the Athenaeum, courteously putting me right about my recent story involving Crookford's Clerical Directory, sends me another story about his club.

"Fifteen years ago," writes my correspondent, "I was playing billiards in the Athenaeum with old Sir Percy Buck, the musician, and he said to me: 'I suppose you've heard the saying that "to be good at billiards is the sign of a mispent youth"?'

"I said: 'Yes. Why do you ask?'

"Well," he said, "it was in this billiard room that the remark was made."

## . . . Du Temps Perdu

"We were giving hospitality to "The Senior," and old Herbert Spencer was knocking the balls about, when a heavy cavalry major walked in and asked him if he would care for a game. H. S. was assenting, the major ran out in three breaks, each of over thirty, and decided to have their own.

while his opponent made seven all told."

"Sir," pronounced H. S., "while a certain proficiency in games argues a commendable versatility, proficiency such as yours betrays a mispent youth."

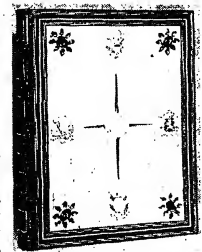
"I said: 'writes my correspondent' 'Good heavens! What an exquisite balance of words. How long do you suppose it took him to think it out?'

"Oh, he always talked like that," replied Buck."

## Bejewelled Roll

NEXT week the most expensively bound book they have ever produced will be sent to the United States by our most famous bindery, Messrs. Sangorski and Sutcliffe. It is a jewel-encrusted roll of honour for the Seventh Regiment of New York, and the covers, made of gold inlaid with precious stones, have been valued at £15,000.

My picture shows the front of the volume. The arms of Great Britain,



the United States, France and Belgium are fashioned of gold, diamonds, rubies and sapphires.

The families of the 840 men whose names are recorded were asked to contribute jewellery rather than money to finance the venture. Most of the stones used are original contributions.

The idea of compiling a roll of honour dates back to 1926, when a team from the Seventh Regiment crossed the Atlantic for a small-arm contest with the Queen's Westminster. The visitors were assenting, the major ran out in three breaks, each of over thirty, and decided to have their own.